ALBANIA YESTERDAY AND TODAY

000 cessible on account of snow during the winter months.

778 Much festivity pervades in this part of the country in the summer months, for tradition has it that on the summit of Tomori is the grave of Iman Abbas Ali to which many natives make pilgrimages every August from
346 the 19th to 28th. For this purpose, a monastery has been built 1,900 feet below the summit by the Bektashi Dervishes, where the pilgrims and visitors may lodge in comfort before the strenuous climb to the topmost
776 point; and it is another native belief that that top is the seat of the ancient sky-god, related to the Zeus of Dodona and Homer's Olympia, and only certain, privileged mortals may reach his abode, others being warned away by
773 nose bleedings and sickness. Also, there is said to be an inaccessible tree bearing golden
778 apples growing on the summit. The peasants often take oath by "Father Tomori," which mountain they regard with superstitious awe. Tourists to Albania often hear this mountain referred to as "The Olympia of Albania."

771 It is the district of Shpat at the base of
551 Mount Bokanik just to the east of this richly historical center that was in constant dispute

AN INTIMATE GLIMPSE INTO ALBANIA

771 years ago as to whether it was to be Christian
351 or Moslem. Therefore, in silent compromise, the elder members of the inhabitants had two names: the Moslem one used for public purposes, and the Christian one used privately and for baptisms and marriages, for these ceremonies a priest was smuggled in and out of the neighborhood by night. It was only about thirty years ago that the Christians felt free to declare openly their faith; this was due greatly to the intervention of the Austrians and Russians. However, those of the older generation retain their Moslem names but their children have been given Christian names only.

312 Perhaps of greatest interest to one visiting
529 this fascinating country for health purposes,
757 will be the healing springs at Llixha, only a few readily negotiable miles from Elbasan. These most unusual springs are certain cures for various forms of rheumatism. The sulphuric waters are so healing that merely by the repeated emptying of cans of water over the body in the oriental fashion many cures have been effected. The ground around these springs is very warm, and until forty years ago, before the useful invasion of the modern

PEAKS OF SHALA

000 The woman, who had been sitting quietly listening to this, now rose and very quietly, without saying farewell, slipped out of the firelight, and in a moment, by the sound of the closing door, I knew she had left the house. But there was something about my last glimpse of her back that makes me believe she is still clamoring for her house, and will be until long after her baby sons are grown and married. Unless she gets it sooner.

533 There was a little silence after the woman had gone, and then one of the youths, compressing his ears with his thumbs, began to sing.[1] He sang softly, for an Albanian mountaineer, but the high, clear notes filled the house like those of a bugle. He uttered a phrase and paused; Cheremi repeated it and paused; and, so singing alternately, repeating always the same musical phrase with changing words, they chanted long songs of war and adventure, old legends of men whose lives had been worn into myths by the erosion of centuries.

The music, strange and nostalgic, seemed to follow a scale quite different from ours, a simple scale of five notes, thin and vibrating like a violin string.

000 [551] "Sing one of the songs of your land, Flower," said Cheremi to me, politely. All the Albanians addressed us by our first names, as is the custom, for among them the last name is merely the possessive form of the father's, and it is dropped in conversation. Long since my name had been

1 [At house in Albanian moun- [112] tains -- Analyst]

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

in danger of foreign attack. To secure such a *besa* and so restore the unity of Mati was now the Agha's foremost aim.

We were joined every now and then by groups of notables who would accompany us on the march for two or three days. Among them came one, Hafuz Effendi, a shrunken, bird-like creature, who had been deputy of Mati under the Italians. Like many of the older Albanians Hafuz still wrote for preference in the Arabic script and for our benefit recited the opening *surahs* of the Koran. He had been on Essad Pasha's staff in the last war and since then, in the time-serving tradition of the Ottoman bureaucracy, had worked in turn for Fan Noli, Zog, and the Italians. During the occupation, indeed, he had twice betrayed Abas Kupi's hide-out to the Italians, and was even held responsible for the arrest of some of the guerillas. Now, however, that the Italians were gone, he piously proclaimed himself a democrat and had come to offer his services to Abas Kupi, in whom he discerned the paramount influence of the day. Such time-serving exceeded, even among the Albanians; and, despite his great age, he was mocked unmercifully by young and old. He was a guest, however, albeit self-invited, and while he was with us no one would have thought of harming him. Abas Kupi let him stay with us two days and then dismissed him to his house, but kindly; for it was now his policy to forget the past and to stretch out a hand to all who would support him.

Germanic names, such as Allemani and Walter, were found among the Mati clans, derived, so it was said, from Crusaders who had settled in Albania on their way to the East. The Walter clan had declared for Abas Kupi, but they were still suspect to the Zogists; for they had long been blood enemies of the King. One of them indeed, named Bekir, had tried in 1924 to assassinate Zog in the Tirana Parliament. He had only succeeded in wounding him and, to escape capture, had then locked himself up in the Parliament lavatory. There he had reloaded and prepared to stand siege, singing patriotic songs to keep up his courage. None of the deputies had dared to break in the door, for they knew that Bekir was armed;

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

or incapacitated, one of his wife's relatives must come for her and bring her back, but that meant the extra trouble of letting them know that she was coming.

Each member of a household had a personal name. Though this was usually determined by the religion professed, Moslem first names were not uncommon among the Catholics. The usual cause seems to have been no more than a personal whim. Thus the junior bajraktar ('standard-bearer')[1] of Shalë, a Catholic, was called Avdi because his father was very friendly with a Moslem of that name at the time of his birth. Another interesting anomaly is found in the forty-three Orthodox villages of Shpat, near Elbasan, where the older men have two names, a Moslem one for public use and an Orthodox one for private. For some decades before Albania freed herself from Turkish rule these villages were pressed by the Moslems of Elbasan to abandon Christianity and, to save their faith and lives, camouflaged themselves as Moslems, giving themselves Moslem names, keeping the Ramazan fast, and so on, but evading circumcision. At intervals they fetched an Orthodox priest from Elbasan under cover of night so that in some dark stable he might marry the newly wed with Christian rites and baptize the newly born. So, to name only two examples, the apparently Moslem Tahir Baduri of Shelcan and Ymer Tullumi of Bujars are really the Christian Spiro Baduri and Vasil Tullumi. Religious persecution having ended when Albanian independence was attained, the Orthodox of Shpat shed their Moslem camouflage and gave only Christian names to their children. If Godolesh, the picturesque village north of Elbasan, had managed to hold out for only two years more against the pressure to 'turn Turk', it, too, might now still have been Christian. It failed to hold out, so that its middle-aged and young inhabitants are fanatical Moslems but the old still visit Orthodox churches in secrecy and grieve that they must lie in a Moslem grave. One sturdy old woman, who married soon after the conversion to Islam, boasted that she had had all her four sons baptized. One of them confirmed this to the author, saying he had often been told by Christian and Moslem alike that he smelt less than did other Moslems, an agreeable peculiarity which he attributed to his baptism. The Greeks too, who introduced Orthodox Christianity into Albania, subscribed to the belief that baptism takes away the smell from which all Moslems suffer.

[1] See Chapter XI.

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

Women, too, had a personal name, but after they married their husbands were too shy to use it, and others knew them in early life as 'Mark's (or Asllan's or Vasil's) young wife' and in later life as his 'wife' or 'old woman', so that their own name fell into disuse. This contributed to their seclusion from the outside world and at the same time avoided the superfluous; since descent in the female line did not count, their names were not thought worth remembering.

Surnames in the sense of family names were general among the Orthodox, comparatively rare among the Moslems, and non-existent among the Catholics. Both Moslems and Catholics, however, tacked on the name of a man's father to his own and so distinguished him from his fellows. Thus a Moslem called Sadik Asllan was Asllan's Sadik and different from Sadik Arif, the son of Arif. A Catholic called Zef Nika was Nikë's Zef, i.e. Zef son of Nikë—Joseph Nicolson in English—and Zef Toma was Tom's Zef, i.e. Joseph Thomson, quite another person. Nika and Toma are in the indefinite genitive, to mark possession. As Moslem names might also be put in this genitive in Albania, Sadik Asllani, an Albanian form, was as frequently heard as Sadik Asllan, its Turkish counterpart. The endings of the Albanian indefinite genitive, it should be said, are tricky and vary according to the final letter of the root word and also according to the dialect used. They are further liable to be confused by foreigners with the definite article which Albanians must suffix to the name when making a statement about a person or a place. Thus Zef Nika signed himself so, without any suffixed article, but if another Albanian reported that 'Zef had gone', he must add the definite article to the name, saying *Zefi iku*. Turkish influence also made Moslems stop at the father's name, but the Catholics, who seem to have preserved the oldest Albanian method of nomenclature, often appended the grandfather's name as well.

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

CHAPTER XI

BAJRAKTARS

It is an Albanian tradition that when the Turks began to raise Albanian levies for their army they chose specially brave tribesmen to lead the levies and called them by the Turkish name of *deli*, meaning 'madman' or 'desperado'. At a later date they called them *spahis* (cavalrymen), and at a still later date *bajraktars* (standard-bearers), from the Turk *bajrak*, standard. So the word bajraktar conveys the business of the man so-called, and the origin of his title. He was the military leader of his tribe and owed his appointment to the Turks, not to his fellow-Albanians.

Neither delis nor spahis seem to have been blood ancestors of the bajraktars. Each tribe knows how its first bajraktar won his flag but never says that he was either a deli or a spahi. In the folk-tales which purport to recount their deeds, the spahis figure not as heroes but as ordinary cavalrymen of the type we still find in Algeria. Certain families, notably in Lumë and Yugoslav Losovë, are surnamed Spahi. These claim descent not from medieval bravos but from relatively modern cavalrymen, and they are not bajraktars. The memory of the delis and their deeds survives only in folk-tales and an occasional personal name. The bajraktar of Hot at the beginning of the century was Deli Metë Çuni. In the folk-tales the delis, more fortunate than the spahis, preserve their reputation as doughty fighters.

Tribal traditions agree that most *bajraks* were bestowed on the original holder like a Victoria Cross, for valour in battle. The combats were generally against the Serbs and Montenegrins, natural enemies of the Albanians as they were their nearest neighbours, and had not ceased ever since they appeared in the Balkans to steal ancient Albanian territory. Some bajraks are said to have been gained hundreds of years ago, and others only a few generations since. The historical details in the traditions are generally meagre and the chronology vague, but these defects make on the whole for greater credibility, assuring us that no lively imagination has been at work. To minds running as Albanian

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1
Montenegrins EF5
Serbs EF6
Bulgaria EE1

Some Balkan Taboos. Iron. Hair

S 186 114

begs and I was propitiated on all sides. It was the thing to ask me into the nearest house and stuff me with food, and for days my hotel bills were almost nil. But that was in the days of the Obrenovitch, when the Karageorgevitches had been exiled for ever and ever for having murdered Prince Michael. They now reign over wide lands for having murdered the Archduke Ferdinand.

We, too, have a stranger craze. We still hedge the stranger with difficulties until, or unless, we think fit to feast him at the Guildhall, hoping earnestly that by thus feeding the beast we may induce him to work magic in our favour with tariffs or arm his compatriots on our behalf.

2. The Name Taboo

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Among many primitive races all the world over a man's name is part of himself. Just as spells to hurt a man may be wrought by means of bits of his hair or nails, so, too, can evil be worked by using his name. The name is, therefore, a thing to be carefully guarded. Thus is the name taboo explained by authorities on the subject.

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The taboo is common in the Balkans. In 1904, among the Bulgars of Macedonia, I had to classify long lists of refugees. Woman after woman would give her name as "Maria," and refuse, with tears running down her cheeks, to give her husband's name, or any clue to her identity, save perhaps the name of her father in a distant village. "They are ashamed. You must not ask such a thing," I was told. I had asked an indecent question and hurt their feelings. "Ask another woman." The Maria in question would hurry from the room, while I learnt from a woman of the same village that the husband's name was Dmitri, son of George. This constantly happened when I have dealt with Bulgar and Albanian refugees. The explanation always is that they are "modest."

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In Montenegro the custom was nearly dead—but not quite. Old folk still thought it improper for man and wife to name each other. The schoolmaster at Tzrmnitza told me that there were still many who had never done so. Savo Vuletitch, himself a Montenegrin, in one of his admirable tales of Montenegro, tells how "Petar Radisitch, though he had lived on the best of terms with his wife for full twenty years, had never called her by her name, nor even spoken to her as a human being, on any subject, if it were possible for a stranger to overhear. Had he to speak to her in public he muttered through his teeth, and she did the same by him. To have done otherwise would have been shameful."

A plan I found adopted was that the man gave his order in the

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1
Montenegrins EF5

M 184 551 576 third person without looking at his wife: "She is to bring coffee." Or turned his back and gave the order over his shoulder: "Bring coffee." If he had to mention his wife or present her, the older men still did so with a formal apology: "Da oprostish—moja zhena" ("If you will pardon me—my wife"). This I heard often enough. The mention of any female relative was avoided, and a man with daughters but no sons would emphatically declare he had no children. The girl child was made to feel her inferiority early. "A man feeds his son for himself, but his daughter for another man," she was told.

M 606 551 576 The name taboo till recently extended to other members of a household. The daughter-in-law, when brought to the family house, was not to call her new in-laws by their baptismal names.

"She dared not, for modesty," says Vuk Karadjitch. She addressed them all by nicknames which implied admiration or respect. Thus she called the elder brethren of the house Gospodin (sir), or Djever (brother-in-law), or even Ago (a great Aga). The younger more familiarly, as Sokolo (falcon), Miloshto (dear one), Zlatoye (golden one), or Krasni (the handsome). The elder women of the house were called Gospa (lady); the sisters-in-law Snasha, if they were the wives of the husband's brothers. If they were the unmarried sisters of the husband, who would all be very young in a land where girls are often married at fourteen, they were given fancy names, such as Lepotitza or Ubavitza (pretty little one), or Gospodjitza (little lady), or Golubitza (little dove). Beyond the family circle I found no trace of name taboo in Montenegro.

A 551 553 In the North Albanian mountains, however, in the Dukagin districts, it was decidedly unadvisable for a man's real name to be known. Especially in Shala, Shoshi, and Nikaj, I found it customary for men to adopt another name. It was a constant annoyance to the Franciscans that, though they baptized their flocks with good Albanian Christian names such as Kol (Nicholas), Gin (John), Ded (Dominic), or Pietr (Peter), the lads, on growing up, persisted in calling themselves by another name, preferably a Moslem one. They rigidly kept the fasts; they flocked to church on a feast day; according to their rather dim lights they fulfilled some, at least, of their religious duties. But they called themselves Hussein, or Ismail, or Mehmed, and no plea or threat of the priest could budge them. I was once asked by a Franciscan to express my horror of the practice to a whole party of men. I therefore said no one in England would believe they were Christians if they had such names. They did not like this and crossed themselves repeatedly in proof of their faith. But on this question they were obstinate. They did it "because they wished to," "because the names were beautiful" and, most convincing of all, "because we always do."

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2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1
Montenegrins EF5
Great Russians RF2
Greece EH1
Serbs EF6

Some Balkan Taboos. Iron. Hair

The district was known to swarm with witches and, though none of them said so, similar customs in other lands make it probable that the nickname was intended to shield its owner's identity. How better than by taking a Moslem name?

A good example was my old friend, plucky old Mehmed Shpend of Shala, a well-known headman. It was incredible—nor did anyone pretend—that he had been baptized Mehmed the Raven. But when asked what his Christian name was he only grinned and twinkled, and said that "Mehmed Shpend" was "fort i bukur" ("very pretty").

A curious example of the belief that the Name is the Person occurred at Mount Athos at the beginning of this century. A Russian officer entered one of the monasteries as a monk. He was pious and much respected. Pondering over the sacred mysteries, it seemed fit to him that separate worship should be given to the Name of God. The idea found favour among some of the monks, and the cult of the name was instituted by them. The authorities at Athos forbade it, but the cult became more popular. It ended abruptly by the arrival of a Russian warship. The misguided monk was carried off and the heresy ended. The Russian Government, whether Tsarist or Bolshevist, stands no nonsense.

The Importance of a Name.—In Montenegro it was believed that the naming of a child may have an influence on its fate. It is customary for the same man to be christening "kum" (godfather) to all the children of one family. But if one child after another dies it is clear that the kum is unsuitable; and, in order to make sure this time that the kum is pleasing to God, the next infant is left in its cradle by the wayside. The mother hides close by. The first wayfarer who rashly stoops and looks at the infant is at once claimed as kum and must not refuse.

On the way up to Durmitor I saw a cradle all alone, and was about to investigate it when Krsto snatched hold of me, crying: "No! no! you will have to be kum!" He then halted and shouted out for the mother, saying that neither of us was going to be trapped into being kum. The mother came up laughing, with a sickle in her hand. She said she was merely cutting some grass and had brought the baby with her. It was already baptized; so we passed on safely. Being kum cost a deal of money and trouble. But we might have refused? "No," said Krsto decidedly; "if you are caught that is quite impossible."

Under such circumstances, and especially if the child is weakly, it is common to baptize it Zhivko (lively), or Vuk (wolf), or one of the many derivatives of Vuk—Vuksan, Vujadin, Vule, etc., or Dabizhiv (mayest thou live), in order to give strength.

The custom exists, too, in Serbia and Bosnia. In old days, in Montenegro, when the christening of children was part of the ceremony

In Mer -

178 turi and Nikaj, the men adopt 2 sets of names,
795 Moslem and Christian, and employ the former
[55] while traveling to avoid trouble. They get used to these names and in many cases use them at home. In Hoti, the *bairaktar* once led his men against the invading Serbs, with the help of the Turkish government. In gratitude for his brave and successful conduct the Turks granted him special privileges, and he went over, with his family, to Islam. The rest of the *bairak* is still mostly Catholic, but the tendency in such a case is for the others to follow the leader. In Lura, where mixed families are found, the Catholics have given up keeping pigs so as not to offend the Moslems, and celebrate Moslem festivals as well as Christian ones, to avoid trouble. Very rarely a Mirdite will marry a Moslem woman from Mati, but when he does she becomes Catholic.

797 When the Turks introduced Islam, all
144 Ghegs were Catholics. Almost exclusively, the change has been in the Moslem direction. Hence we may assume that almost none of the present-day Catholics bear genetic elements brought in from outside the region by the Turks or their followers, while the same is not necessarily true of the Moslem Ghegs. *Bairak* by *bairak* and tribe by tribe, as conversion progressed, the line between the 2 religions has remained, by and large, a marital barrier. During the whole period of the Turkish rule, Catholics have furthermore been able to travel much less widely than Moslems, with resultant genetic implications.

771 In Albania one frequently hears the remark that "the Albanians are not very religious." This is usually said with pride, for the presence of 3 religions in so small a country is deemed a dangerous impediment to political unity. In one sense, the remark is quite true. Few Albanians are religious fanatics; few of them worry about their spiritual salvation. Most of the Catholics go to church with some regularity, and most of the Moslems keep Ramadan. However, their ancient way of life provides most of the ritual which they need to tide them over emotional crises, so that church and
771 mosque are in many ways superfluous. A
596 man's first loyalty is to his "blood," that is, his extended family. He spends much of his time, effort, and material goods keeping the family together and avenging any deed which has up-